

Galatians 5:7-15 Running Unhindered

7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. 12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

In the Classic movie Chariots of Fire – Eric Liddell is having a conversation with his sister

A)She didn't understand his love of running and his interest in competing in the Olympic games -
His Calling Missionary

B)Liddell – Answered his sister in this way: *All I know is that God has made me fast & I feel his pleasure when I run!!!*

C) Well in reality every Christian has been called to Run – not in a Physical sense – but in a Spiritual one

1)The bible likens the Christian life to a race

Paul was fond of athletic illustrations and used them often in his letters.

A)His readers were familiar with the Olympic games as well as other Greek athletic contests that almost always included foot races.

B)Paul turns to the Race analogy once more –
YOU RAN WELL..

C)Here Paul is comparing the Christian life to that of running in a race v.7 *You guys were running so well – who hindered you ?*

D)The Dangers of Legalism – **1st It hinders our spiritual progress**

hindered: “interesting word – that signifies ‘to break up a road’ . . . so as to render it impassable.

A)The Galatians were doing well until someone broke up the road they were running on !!!!

B)It was as if someone threw a huge obstacle in the way – making it impossible for them to pass.

1)They were hindered from progressing in the faith

C)They had been shackled by the weight of Legalism 1)tripped up by the pressures of a Performance based acceptance relationship with God.

D)Instead of going forward in the faith they were stuck – even going backwards/ knocked out altogether

Running is a sport where light weight unrestrictive equipment is essential – Light shorts / shirts / shoes

A)Guys don't run cross country in Ski bibs & ski boots

B)Joggers don't jog – carrying a sack of Potatoes

1)the whole goal is to avoid anything that is not going to allow you to run unhindered

C)Now prisoners on the other hand are often transported in shackles

1)because they don't want them to run very fast –
goal is to keep them in Check

Well legalism is like a set of Shackles

A)That is designed to keep Christians from moving in the freedom that is theirs in Jesus Christ

B)For the Christian who is trying to run bound by the Shackles of Legalism

1)the Christian life becomes a Chore / Drudgery instead of a Joy !!!

C)That eventually **SUCKS THE LIFE RIGHT OUT OF THEM**

Now that is what was happening to the Christians in Galatia -They came to Christ / free / they were running – enjoying the Lord

A)They came to Christ – set free- they were off and running enjoying the Lord

B)And then the legalist showed up

1)said – if you really want to be saved you need to follow this SYSTEM... Judaism – circumcision

C)It left them all messed up & confused

They were running Free but it was like someone thru a load of weights upon them –

A)When that happens the Christian life becomes a Burden

B)full of **HAVE TOS AND HAVE NOTS**

1)PBA – treadmill

C)Where we become consumed by external measures of righteousness

1)rather than the Internal issues of the heart

D)Then We become cynical & Judgmental in our attitudes toward others

1)and it not only affects us – but everyone around us

Which is why in Paul changes the metaphor from running to cooking in v.9 When he says *a Little leaven leavens the whole lump!!!*

A)Legalism spreads like Leaven

B)Leaven in scripture is often likened to sin a little goes a long way It grows & spreads –

C)A little sin / a little compromise can infect the whole body !!!

D)Here Paul is using the same analogy to illustrate the affects of legalism

The Spirit of legalism does not suddenly over power a Church-

A)It is introduced Subtly – starts in small doses

B)But Like leaven it grows, if left alone it will take over

C))But soon it is prominent in the Culture of the Church –

1)Full of hang ups and false standards of righteousness

Those in the “in crowd all walk by the same standards – impose those standards on others

A)Often times those standards are not even Biblical

B)How ladies dress/ what families do for entertainment – music and movies

1)The approach toward Alcohol

C)The Church suddenly becomes known for everything that they are against

1)Instead of what they are for

D)It is so easy to get off base.

Suppose you’re sitting on a 757 Maui-bound jumbo jet. Just before take-off you hear the voice of the captain over the loudspeaker, saying, ‘We have a small problem here today. Our navigational instrument is off one degree.

But what’s one degree? Sit back and relax, and we’ll be taking off shortly.’

A)If I were on that plane, *I would say, ‘Open the door. I’m out of here’* — because, while one degree might not make a very big difference from here to Oceanside

B)But one degree would cause the plane to miss Maui by 350 miles. We’d all be shark bait!

C)That’s why Paul said, **‘Don’t even start with legalism.**

It might not make any noticeable difference at first, but over the long haul it will be disastrous.’

Legalism is DANGEROUS – but not only for those who fall under it’s burdernsome influences – but also for those who teach it

A)Those who teach Legalism will be Judged *V. 10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*

NIV The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.

B)Let every Sunday School worker, every Bible study teacher,

1)every family devotion leader hear Paul’s heart as he says to the Galatians,

Those who are causing you to get entangled in legalism will bear the responsibility for what they’re doing.’

A) James would echo the same warning, writing: *'Let not many of you desire to be teachers, knowing that you shall receive the greater condemnation,'* (James 3:1). Gulp.

B) All of us involved in teaching need to approach our calling soberly and prayerfully.
Like Timothy, *2 Tim 2:15*

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth

C) We who are teachers have a huge responsibility to make sure that what we are teaching is Biblical
1) not opinions or own personal convictions

D) Held accountable for our handling of God's word
1) Serious Business

Now apparently from what Paul says in V.11

A) These false teachers were trying to say that Paul also taught – you need to be circumcised in order to be saved

B) Paul says – if that were true – then why am I still being persecuted

C) Read the book of Acts – Dejavu –

D) Paul goes into a new city – Synagogue – Salvation is in Jesus – Not in following the law –
1) Riots Beaten – jailed – The Jewish people hated Paul

Paul went from being the Champion of Judaism – as a persecutor of the Church

A) to Public enemy #1 as a minister of Jesus

B) Paul says that makes no sense – if I was teaching what you guys are teaching
1) The Jews would have no problem with me

C) Just to put an exclamation point on how he felt about this

1) Notice how far Paul goes in v.12 *I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!*

E) Listen to Eugene Peterson's paraphrase, *"Why don't these agitators, obsessive as they are about*

circumcision, go all the way and castrate themselves!"

Now with such a dramatic conclusion to this point, Paul has made one thing clear: legalism is no little thing.

A) It takes away our liberty and puts us into bondage.

B) It makes Jesus and His work of no profit to us.

C) It puts us under obligation to the whole law.

D) It makes us focus on things that are irrelevant.
1) It keeps us from running the race Jesus set before us.

E) In light of how serious all this is, it's no wonder that Paul says he wishes they would even cut themselves off! **Champion for FREEDOM**

Where do you stand on this issue of legalism? I want you to think for a moment-

A) Have you allowed yourself to come under a set of legalistic ideas? –

B) External standards for righteousness that are not necessarily Biblical?

C) Listen it is not wrong to have personal convictions

1) The Lord has clearly showed me certain things that are wrong for me – not necessarily others

D) Lord knows our weaknesses

1) But if a person starts making their personal convictions the standard for everyone else – that is a PROBLEM

Now as Paul moves on – he wants us to understand this very important truth about our freedom in Jesus Christ

A) We have been set free – but freedom carries with it a huge responsibility

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

B)Free – Don't use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

C)The mentality shouldn't be I am free – do whatever I want to do – no matter who doesn't like it

We are free but we are called to live by a higher law THE LAW OF LOVE !

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

A)LOVE GOD AND LOVE EACH OTHER You are free to Love –

B)Romans 14-15 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 – Paul shares what the looks like

1)Should Christians eat meat sacrificed to idols ?

C)The mature and the immature believer

The Mature – and idol is nothing it doesn't matter

A)Immature – to eat is like participating in the idolatry

B)We would think the opposite – the person who is holy – nothing to do with Idols

C)Not the case – The mature person realizes – an Idol is nothing

But Paul doesn't command the immature to grow up and get with the program

A)NO his instruction is for the Mature brother who understands liberty to practice Love

B)Don't flaunt it - If you know it bothers them don't do it in front of them

1)don't try to convince them that they are wrong

C)Love says – I am going to prefer my brother above myself

1)Paul goes so far as to say – I will never eat meat again stumble

D)Here is the law of love – The weight is put on the mature believer to walk in sensitivity toward his weaker brother or sister

We are free and we are called to walk in Love – that is the culture that is to be cultivated in the church.

A)That seems like we are giving a pass to the one who has the hang ups

B)Nope just exercising patience and love –

C)Freedom to prefer others above myself

1)There is joy in that

D)Culture that is relaxed and not uptight

So on matters that are not about doctrine – I am to simply love – agreeing to disagree –

A)Not making a big deal about something that isn't doctrinal

B)Today Vaccine or no Vaccine – Your choice

C)On matters that are about personal preference

1)lets love one another and keep our opinions to ourselves

D)If we don't the opposite will be true - 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

E)Instead of impacting the world we will destroy ourselves

F)Keep the main thing.. the main thing – JESUS